

Appl. No. 10/735,063
Response dated March 1, 2007
Reply to Office Action of December 4, 2006

REMARKS

Claims 1, 5, and 6 have been amended. Claims 3, 7 – 10, 12 – 14, 17, and 21 remain withdrawn. Claims 2, 11, 15, 16, and 18 – 20 remain as previously or originally presented. Claim 4 has been cancelled.

In response to the Examiner's earlier election requirement, Applicant failed to identify claim 5 as a claim readable on the elected species. This omission was made in error. It is submitted that the subject matter of claim 5 is clearly readable on the subspecies of 1.a) vascular grafts, 2.b)ii. non-woven nano/microstructure microporous sheaths, 3.a) immobilized albumin, and 4.b) knitted polypropylene fabric. In fact, it is with the basic molecule polylysine that the albumin is most preferably immobilized on the blood contacting surface of the vascular grafts. Accordingly, it is requested that claim 5 be considered during the present prosecution.

Claims 1, 2, 4, 6, 11, 15, 16, and 18 – 20 have been rejected under 35 USC §103(a) as being unpatentable over Lahtinen in view of either Inoue et al. or Horowitz et al. The Examiner argues that Lahtinen discloses the present vascular construct essentially as claimed but fails to disclose the method for imparting sulfonic acid on the polypropylene surface, which can be learned from Horowitz et al. or Inoue et al. However, independent claim 1, from which the remaining rejected claims all depend, as been amended to include the limitation of dependent claim 4. That is, the present claims require that a basic molecule is ionically bound to the sulfonic groups and then to the biomolecule. As was noted in the present specification at page 7, lines 4 – 7:

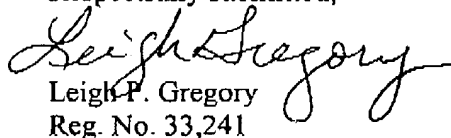
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The anion-forming surface is then neutralized with an organic base, or polycations such as polylysine, so as to infer a net positive charge on the surface. This, in turn, is allowed to immobilize one, or more, biocompatible protein with minimum or no change in its conformation.

The Examiner notes that Horowitz et al. and Inoue et al. are concerned with rendering the surface anionic. Thus, it is submitted that no combination of Lahtinen and these secondary references obviates the present, newly amended claims.

Accordingly, it is submitted that the present case is in condition for allowance and such action is respectfully requested. Please address all correspondence to the below-indicated address.

Respectfully submitted,


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